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Tourism as Modern Pilgrimage: A Museum in Bruges, Belgium

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TOURISM AS MODERN PILGRIMAGE

A MUSEUM IN BRUGES, BELGIUM

A Thesis Presented

by

JOHANNA AIDA VANDEMOORTELE

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

September 2009

Architecture + Design Program Department of Art, Architecture and Art History

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DEDICATION

For my Family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank everyone who has helped me on this journey. Special thanks to my family and Stephen Schreiber, who have been supportive along every part of my meander. Without you, I would not have arrived.

ABSTRACT

TOURISM AS MODERN PILGRIMAGE

A MUSEUM IN BRUGES, BELGIUM

SEPTEMBER 2009

Directed by: Professor Stephen Schreiber

Arguing that one of the multiple dimensions of a Museum's role is as a landmark of cultural pilgrimage, this Master's Thesis uses notions of pilgrimage and journeying to develop a Museum of Medieval and Contemporary Art in Bruges, Belgium.

As a top cultural destination for tourists, as well as a World Heritage Site, Bruges is a perfect location for a Museum based on ideas of tourism and cultural pilgrimage. In addition, the design of the Museum stems from a historic and present-day site analysis. From this study, various elements are reinterpreted in order to weave together the site's history with the pilgrim's notion of path and place.

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE

Project Intent

This Master's Project's intent is to develop an understanding of the Museum as a site of pilgrimage. Through researching the blurred line between pilgrimage and tourism, it is argued that modern day tourism can be interpreted as cultural pilgrimage. In so doing, the Museum becomes a key center and pilgrimage destination. Several scales are used to develop the project, stemming from a study of how pilgrimage is related to the museum. In this sense, the macro and urban scale of the city is considered, as well as the micro scale of detail and the individual pilgrim. By studying the role of the museum as a center of cultural and aesthetic display, this thesis unravels its "sacred" nature and questions how journey and pilgrimage can influence the design of a museum.

The project then develops the design for a Museum of Medieval and Contemporary Art in Bruges, Belgium. Using pilgrimage as the context for such a study will frame the different areas of interest of the project. Studying pilgrimage and its impact on a city will bring to light questions that can be directly studied in the realm of architecture and for the museum itself.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH

Introduction

Pilgrimage may be one of the oldest forms in which humans have shown observance and reverence to their gods. In Antiquity, the Greeks performed festive pilgrimages, such as the Panathenaic Procession, which led a procession through the urban agora and up to the sacred temples of the Acropolis in Athens. A much different form of pilgrimage arose in the Middle Ages, in which a solitary and arduous pilgrimage, like that to Santiago de Compostela, was seen as the ultimate act toward God. Several more examples of pilgrimage exist in history, each one different in specifics, yet, each sharing “a set of ritual actions involving specific human communities, institutions, and organized travel to and from sacred places”¹.

This paper studies the notion of pilgrimage in relation to contemporary society. The question of what a modern pilgrim is raises arguments over the blurred line between tourism and pilgrimage. It also questions the purpose of modern pilgrimage in a world where the everyday spiritual and sacred has taken a back seat to the profane and secular. Within this context, the idea of the tourist as a secular pilgrim will begin to weave the similarities of both acts of travel and devotion together. By exploring the journey and path of tourism and pilgrimage, as well as the destination, or ultimate “sacred” space, one can begin to unravel the importance of paths, portals, thresholds, peripheries, centers and landmarks as urban markers of the pilgrimage journey.

Such a study will develop an understanding of pilgrimage in the modern and urban context. In so doing, one modern center, or pilgrimage destination will be argued to be the Museum. With this thesis, the paper will argue how the museum today can be interpreted as

site of modern and cultural pilgrimage. Using examples as well as theoretical texts, the comparison of the museum to a site of pilgrimage, an observation made by several authors, will allow for further study of the museum's relationship to peregrination and its role within our society. Following the macro approach of understanding a museum as an urban center and pilgrimage destination, questions of how such a journey can then be internalized into the museum will offer the reader an analysis of how the notions of journey and pilgrimage can be brought to the design and architecture of the museum as a monument in itself.

Pilgrimage and Tourism

In today's modern world, religion is certainly still practiced but it is no longer such a part of everyday life as it was in Antiquity or the Middle Ages. In those days, religion and life were inseparable, the activities of the everyday were for the gods and the relationship of the people to their gods was forever present. As Jennifer Neils reminds her readers, Pausanias himself said that "the Athenians are more devout about religion than anyone else"² and the influence of the church in the Middle Ages is telling of religion's role upon society then. The word pilgrimage "tends to suggest ...a personal pilgrimage...a penance, a period of self denial and suffering"³. However, one must be prepared to embrace the different interpretations of what pilgrimage was and is in order to begin to develop a better grasp of what a pilgrim is today. In fact, in contrast to the very Christian notion of an arduous pilgrimage, in Antiquity, "pilgrimages were generally sponsored by the polis and a matter of group travel"⁴. Instead of necessarily being for penance or self denial, "ancient pilgrimage tended to be characterized by joy and celebration"⁵. There were also personal pilgrimages, such as those to healing sanctuaries and other religious sites. In order to escape routine, "men enjoyed feasting and entertainment" during pilgrimage as a "reprieve from the

monotony of daily life”⁶. Since travel, like everything, was done with and for the gods, writings such as those of the traveler Pausanias show that the pilgrim of antiquity was also a spiritual tourist. In Ancient Greek culture, this form of “early tourism almost always had a religious component”⁷.

Pilgrimage can be compared to tourism today in the sense that both can be seen as travel away from the daily routine for another purpose, albeit that tourism may no longer be so intrinsically attached to one’s religion or god/s. However, since pilgrimage is different from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, must we not also accept that it comes in a different guise today as well? In this sense, one could agree with MacCannell when we consider tourism to be *the pilgrimage of modern man*⁸. However, as Cohen describes, one important difference between pilgrimage and tourism is their direction of the path of travel. He argues that in pilgrimage, one travels “from the periphery toward the cultural center, in modern tourism, away from the cultural centre into the periphery... toward the center of other cultures and societies”⁹.

Such arguments, however, do not fully resolve what a modern pilgrim is. In fact, one can easily get trapped into a battle of deciding whether tourism is pilgrimage or not. Instead, one can use these arguments to see the multi-dimensional aspect of pilgrimage, especially in today’s world. Instead of only justifying pilgrimage within a religious context, we must begin to use our new cultural and sociological landscape in order to define what pilgrimage is today. As Campo writes, “Modernity, rather than displacing pilgrimages, has actually been responsible for globalizing them, a process that involves their appropriation by expert systems, the fostering of diverse and sometimes contending interpretations of their significance, and the actual production of new pilgrimage landscapes”¹⁰. Keeping this in

mind, the blurred line between pilgrimage and tourism can be an opportunity to find a deeper understanding for what draws people together to certain sites and spaces.

Both pilgrimage and tourism can be interpreted as a journey toward a cultural center, not only a religious center. In fact, “there exist other than purely religious traditional centers of pilgrimage – such as cultural, aesthetic (artistic or natural)...Visits to the great artistic centers of the past, the heritage of one’s own culture...may take on the quality of cultural pilgrimages”¹¹. In this sense, a museum is a cultural center of its urban landscape, is a center to which cultural pilgrims are drawn to.

Museum as a Site of Pilgrimage

The role of the museum as a landmark for a tourist/modern pilgrim to a city is crucial. In fact, “museums and tourism have several things in common. These include the production and exhibition of culture, a dependence on an audience...and that they are both the result of travel”¹². In this sense, the journey toward the museum is part of a larger journey and fabric of paths, space and time that make up the history and collection of the museum itself.

Using the museum as one type of center or destination of modern and cultural pilgrimage will help place it within the broader, urban scale of its city. From Antiquity to today, pilgrimage has had a tremendous impact on the cities that make up its journey, as well as the final destination itself. When considering the impact of the pilgrimage of Santiago de Compostela, one cannot overlook how it fits into the fabric of Spain. As Stokstad writes, “without a well-kept road system, the city of Santiago de Compostela could not have existed as an international intellectual and cultural center”¹³. In this sense, the city as a pilgrimage site relied on the infrastructure of its own urban context and beyond. In a similar way, there is a

symbiotic relationship between a museum and its urban context. While the museum acts as an important destination for people, it also relies on the city to attract and properly manipulate this flow.

The words of Georges Bataille must be highlighted to further this exploration of the museum as a site of pilgrimage. In an essay entitled, “Museum”, he writes, “A museum is like a lung of a great city; each Sunday the crowd flows like blood into the museum and emerges purified and fresh.”¹⁴. Here, his words highlight two important points being argued.

First, by comparing the museum to the *lung of a great city*, it is clear that the museum, to him, plays an important role in the development, in fact, the livelihood, of a great city. The city relies on the lung, and in turn, the lung needs the city in order to survive. As a simile for its role in the urban landscape, this remark sheds light on the importance of the museum as a landmark. With an introduction of a landmark, a “point [reference] considered to be external to the observer”¹⁵, the journeyer has an invisible path that (s)he can follow from where (s)he stands to the point of the landmark. In so doing, the networks and path of the urban context are crucial for the design and development of a museum. Understanding the museum as a landmark allows us to give it a description as a center with physical and determined characteristics. As a landmark, it becomes intrinsically rooted in the fabric of the rest of its surroundings. This is one of the “strongest virtues that many museums possess simply by their very nature, character, and history. It is the rootedness of museums in the local community that makes them so distinctive”¹⁶. Just as the Parthenon was the ultimate landmark looking down from the Acropolis in Athens, or the spires of the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, nestled amid the winding medieval streets, made it stand out as the landmark of the city, a museum is also an attraction and a place of ultimate destination.

In addition, the impact of pilgrimage upon the city has always been that of economic

stimulus. Our “urban economy is becoming increasingly dependent on the production and consumption of culture”¹⁷ and the demand for popular museums is rampant in today’s great cities. Today, the “religion” is that of aesthetic, personal and cultural experience. The role of the museum as a landmark is telling of the museum’s social responsibility. Both the design and the role of the museum must be integrated in some way with the city. It is a place of learning as well as a site of pilgrimage and must recognize its place within the landscape it exists within.

Second, Bataille points out another, more subtle aspect of the role of the museum. When he writes that “each Sunday the crowd flows like blood into the museum and emerges purified and fresh.”¹⁸, there is a hint of religiosity and spirituality in the museum’s role as a *Sunday purifier*. Here, one is introduced to one of the many instances in which the museum is interpreted as a temple or religious destination. While not comparable to the religious following of churches in the Middle Ages or temples in Antiquity, a museum also holds a specific sacred nature. As Cameron writes,

“sociologically, [the museum] is much closer in function to the church than it is to the school. The museum provides opportunity for reaffirmation of the faith, it is a place for private and intimate experience, although it is shared with many others; it is, in concept, the temple of the muses”¹⁹.

In order to fully grasp the role of the museum as a site of peregrination, our understanding of pilgrimage must be open-minded and multi-dimensional. This paper is not arguing that the museum plays the same role as religious sites of antiquity or later Christianity; rather, it is arguing that the museum today is a *modern* site of pilgrimage. One of the foundations for this argument is the inherent sacred nature of museums. Sacred, like pilgrim, could be a disputed term. Here, it is used to counter balance the mundane and profane. To many people, the act of visiting a museum is a personal journey. This personal journey has many purposes;

cultural heritage, aesthetic appreciation, seeing a “must-see”, or ultimately a soul-seeking time to contemplate works in the quiet galleries of a museum.

In addition to Bataille’s reference of a museum as a *Sunday purifier*, his reference to the museum as a lung holds another subtle religious intonation. By referencing the museum as a lung, the museum becomes the “breather” of the city. This is a telling role, since “one device which [has been] practiced for centuries as a means of cultivating the religious attitude of mind is the control of the breath”²⁰. Several different religions throughout history employ breathing exercises as a means to gain spiritual consciousness. Even the “breathing technique that the monk uses when singing psalms (breathing in, holding breath briefly, breathing out)”²¹ in Gregorian Chants is meant as an excise of breath and meditation. Therefore, by directly referencing the museum as a lung, Bataille has put the museum at a spiritual level within its city. The museum acts as a regulator of the spirit and the soul of its city, it is responsible for its everyday life as well as its moments of mediation and spiritual consciousness. This is an interesting observation because the multiple roles of the lung, both profane (mechanic breath) and sacred (meditative/practiced breath) can be directly correlated to the museum, which also plays both a profane as well as a sacred role for its community and visitors.

Most would agree that the threshold of the museum door allows the visitor to enter another world compared to the busy and hectic modern world outside. The shift to the quiet galleries often gives the museum a sense of being a place for personal and aesthetic meditation. Le Corbusier, when speaking of museums wrote that “there are good museums, and bad...But the museum is a sacred entity which debars judgment”²². Of course, arguments over the identity and role of the museum have been forever present, with some arguing it to remain a temple, and others demanding it to become a democratic center²³.

However, as with pilgrimage, the museum also has multiple dimensions and roles. It can be both a temple and a democratic space. As Alan Kaprow writes,

“The Museum may hire a modern architect, may install jazzy lighting effects and piped-in lectures, may offer entertainment and baby-sitting facilities, but it will always be a ‘place of the muses’”²⁴.

The museum has many roles and the fact that it can be interpreted as a sacred space does not mean it cannot be socially responsible and democratic as well. As the Nobel Prize Laureate for economics, Amartya Sen writes, “identities are robustly plural and that the importance of one identity need not obliterate the importance of others”²⁵. While he writes of our own identities, the same is true for museums.

Important to address in regards to the topic of the sacred nature of the museum is how it has been ritualized by our civilization. The museum as a destination, as described above, is a very popular activity and tourist ritual. Tourism in this sense “is a religion-like ritual activity and institution, which, through the sacralization of attractions, creates a world...a certain distance from ‘this world’”²⁶. In order to describe this phenomenon, one could quote the many instances in which people write about visiting a museum as a personal meditation and with a ritualistic nature. The following passage is from *The Soul’s Religion*, written by Thomas Moore, a contemporary spiritual writer:

"Eventually I realized that the purpose of living with images is not to understand them but to be taught by them, not to read a conclusion about them, but to let them take you to a new place...Having been at the chapel, when I now visit the Tate Modern Museum in London, I sit in the Rothko room, surrounded by his awesome canvases, and in spite of the crowds, I can sense the temenos his genius provides, a chapel without walls in which I can still be infused with spirit”²⁷.

While only a personal account, this is a telling description of how a museum can be a site of personal pilgrimage for those who visit it. Although not based on a practiced religion, the draw of culture, art and personal contemplation makes visiting a museum a spiritual exercise

for many people. This makes them pilgrims to the museum. The visit to the museum, or the museum ritual “resembles in some respects certain medieval cathedrals where pilgrims followed a structured narrative route through the interior, stopping at prescribed points for prayer or contemplations...It’s like going on a pilgrimage – it is an act of devotion performed at the shrine of Art”²⁸.

The comparison of the museum to a church or cathedral should be further studied in order to recognize how the museum is a sacred place of pilgrimage. In order to do so, it may be interesting to mention the development of churches, and more specifically, the development of the ambulatory space within a pilgrimage church. The most important element of pilgrimage churches was the “beautiful invention of the ambulatory with radiating chapels”²⁹. This allowed for the easy passage of multiple numbers of pilgrims. In addition, as masses were conducted in the center nave, the large ambulatory as well as the side aisles allowed for the passage of pilgrims without disturbing the service. The “nave extends into the apse aisle so that the pilgrims could walk around them and thus circulate around the church without interrupting the solemn processions that took place at the same time”³⁰. At another scale, the stations of the cross or many other paintings and icons that one finds in churches are often displayed in these side aisles, or the ambulatory space. In this sense, these spaces became a sacred museum for the images of God and religion.

The ambulatory and side aisle, then, make up an architecturalization of a pilgrimage or path. Other churches, like that of Chartres, further accentuate this ongoing journey with labyrinths upon their floors. These elements of the pilgrim church are a reflection of an actual pilgrimage. The aisles leading into the ambulatory, into the radiating chapels, around the altar, and then flowing back into the immense space of the cathedral are lineal elements, roads, axes, a physical manifestation of the pilgrim’s spiritual endeavor to reach their

ultimate goal. All the while, these spaces are also a religious museum, offering lessons in images and sculpture to the devote passers-by.

This notion of the museum as a place of pilgrimage must be further analyzed in today's contemporary art world and its history. As in a pilgrimage church, the ritual of the journey within the museum is just as much a pilgrimage as the journey towards the museum.

Precedent Studies

In order to study these journeys, three case studies of museums, both historic and contemporary, will serve to highlight different elements of how pilgrimage is reflected upon the museum. These precedent studies will shed light on both the museum as a landmark within the urban context as well as the museum as a microcosm of a pilgrimage, housing the journey within its walls.

Schinkel: Altes Museum

Altes Museum (1830)

Berlin, Germany

Karl Friedrich Schinkel

To begin, it is important to recognize that the museum has long been regarded as a place of great importance. In fact, looking back almost two hundred years allows us to examine a museum embedded in museum typology and its history. The Altes Museum in Berlin by Karl Friedrich Schinkel is an oft cited museum in architectural history. Today, it sits as one of five museums on the "Museum Island" in the heart of Berlin. The "development of the complex on the Museum Island began in 1830 with the construction of the Altes Museum, designed by Schinkel. The cluster was finished in 1930, when the

Pergamon Museum opened”³¹. The Altes Museum, being part of this cultural cluster of museums, draws many of Berlin’s visitors. The cluster effect of all these museums emphasizes Museum Island as an even larger landmark than the sum of its parts. As the first museum built on the island, as well as architecturally standing before the others, Schinkel’s Altes museum is a key component of this landmark of culture in Berlin.

The approach to the museum can be directly compared to pilgrimage in Antiquity. This is because Schinkel’s Neoclassical building is an obvious reminder of the temples of Ancient Greece. As Pevsner writes, “the eighteen fluted Ionic columns between the square angle piers are the noblest introduction to a *temple of art*”³². Using a classical and historic order such as this makes the museum give a direct reference to both a history and a space that was sacred and for the gods. In so doing, Schinkel is embedding this myth into the Altes Museum, and constructing a new Temple for the Arts. In addition to the neoclassical reference to the temple, the long line of columns can also be inferred to be a Stoa, which was also used to display works of art in Ancient times, as well as acting as an open and public realm. In this sense, the Temple for the Arts is also a public domain, holding sacred works, but open to the public. In his speech of 1796 to the King of Germany, Hirt writes, “‘Genuine art...ought to be arranged in beautiful order, and [be] easily and daily accessible to all’ ”³³. Schinkel is able to refer to both the sacred and the profane in his design of the Altes Museum in Berlin. Therefore, Schinkel has used an order from history in his own time. This is followed later by Mies van der Rohe’s New National Gallery in Berlin. As Vandenberg writes, “the Parthenon and Karl Friedrich Schinkel’s Altes Museum...and Mies van der Rohe’s New National Gallery maintain an unmistakable similarity of spirit across two and a half thousand years”³⁴.

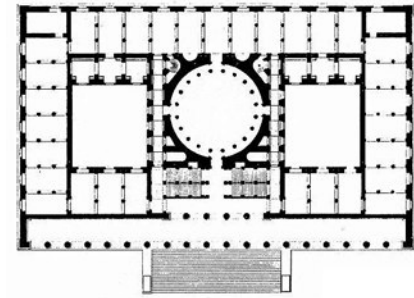


Figure 1: Schinkel, Altes Museum, Berlin, Germany: Plan

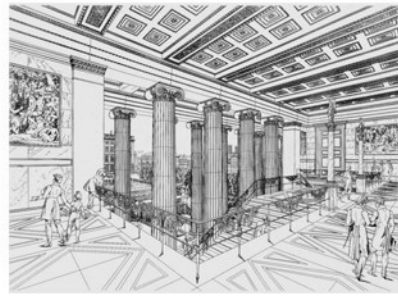


Figure 2: K.F. Schinkel, Altes Museum, Berlin, Germany: Drawing

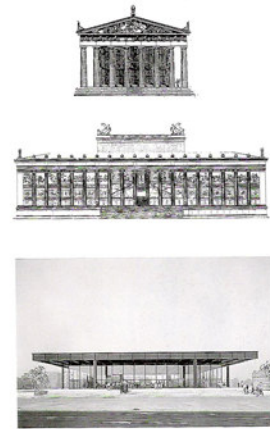


Figure 3: Parthenon, Altes Museum and New National Gallery Facades

In addition, one can see Schinkel's hopes for the museum in a drawing he made from inside the galleries. In this drawing, the pilgrim to the museum looks back on this journey toward the landmark. Past the colonnade, one is introduced to the city of Berlin. While some people in the picture are viewing the presence of the art work, others are peering outside. This notion of looking back is intrinsic to the journey of the pilgrim. By highlighting both the presence of having arrived at the museum, but also offering the viewer a glimpse of the city beyond, Schinkel is further rooting his museum into the myth of Berlin, making it a sacred landmark apart from the city beyond, but embedded in it nonetheless. Here, the notion of his museum as a cultural center, a place of pilgrimage, is only strengthened. One is made aware that the architect himself sees his work as the center of the city as well.

Libeskind: Jewish Museum

The Jewish Museum (1999)

Berlin, Germany

Daniel Libeskind

A second museum, Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, can be interpreted as a site of pilgrimage in a very different way. While Libeskind admits that "the site was in the old center of Berlin, which has once again become the new center"³⁵, it is in fact the journey within the museum that also makes this a site of pilgrimage, in addition to its relationship as another center in the city. Although an extension, the museum is visually held apart and "connected to the Baroque building via underground axial roads"³⁶. One enters the historic building and is then introduced to the Jewish Museum with a portal that leads one below ground. Libeskind describes his museum in terms of roads and axes. This is a direct reference to travel and journeying. While he may never be explicit about it, one can infer that the roads of his museum, which each bear a different significance, are made to be experienced as if on a pilgrimage through the history and suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust. As one enters the museum, the portal reminds one of the medieval portals into the winding streets of a walled city. This threshold is a reminder to the pilgrim of another boundary passed-through, as well as a continued journey ahead.

This continued journey is introduced to the visitor upon passing through the initial threshold. One is confronted with different axes and paths that one can take. As Libeskind himself describes:

"The descent leads to three underground axial *routes*, each of which tells a different story. The first and longest [Axis of Continuity] traces a path leading to the Stair of Continuity, then up to and through the exhibition spaces of the museum, emphasizing the continuum of history. The second [Axis of Exile] leads out of the building and into the E.T.A Hoffman Garden of Exile and Emigration, remembering those who were forced to leave

Berlin. The third [Axis of the Holocaust] leads to a dead end – the Holocaust Void. Cutting through the zigzagging plan of the new building is a void space that embodies absence, a straight line whose impenetrability becomes the central focus around which the exhibitions are organized”³⁷.

From this description, it becomes clear that the experience of the journey and its different significances is the goal of this museum. Therefore, the museum itself has become a wander, a walk. In this sense, the pilgrimage is not only to the museum, but it is the experience of the museum as well. Libeskind describes the Jewish Museum in terminologies of paths and roads. This vocabulary is that of pilgrimage and journeying, and must be understood through experience.

When visiting the museum, it is not simply the zigzag form of the space that highlights this journey, or the straight void that cuts along the visitor’s path. Instead, the notion of pilgrimage and journey is embedded in all different scales of the building. Every detail, including the lighting, helps to emphasize the journey and the different axes and their significance. In so doing, Libeskind has created a museum which is a pilgrimage, a journey of experience, history and culture. This journey starts with the pilgrimage to the museum, and even extends into the Garden of Exile, but most importantly, it is held within the walls and roads of the Jewish Museum.

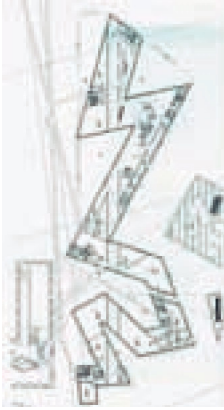


Figure 4: D. Libeskind Jewish Museum Plan

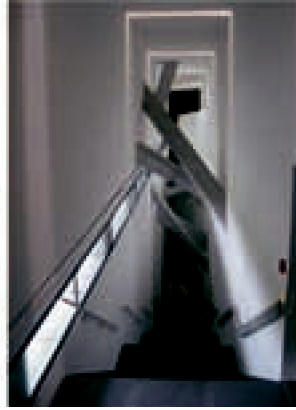


Figure 5: D. Libeskind, Jewish Museum, Berlin, Germany: Stair of Continuity

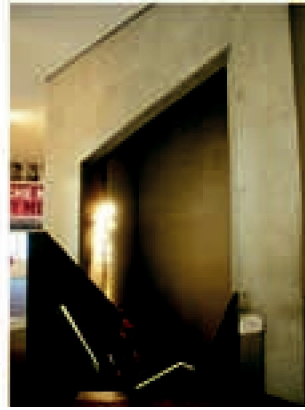


Figure 6: D. Libeskind, Jewish Museum, Berlin, Germany: Entrance Portal



Figure 7: D. Libeskind, Jewish Museum, Berlin, Germany: Intersecting Axes

Siza: Galicia Museum of Contemporary Art

Galicia Museum of Contemporary Art / Santo Domingo de Bonaval Park (1994) Santiago De Compostela, Spain

Alvaro Siza

A third case study looks at another museum which uses a garden as part of its landscape. The Museum of Contemporary Art by Alvaro Siza in Santiago de Compostela in Spain is not only being studied because it is in one of the ultimate centers of pilgrimage in the Christian world, but also because as a museum, it is embedded in the landscape of pilgrimage itself. The museum, “located within the ancient enclosure of the convent of Santiago Domingo de Bonaval, contributes to the urban cohesion of a vast area...[and] serves as a unifying element...[It was] thus given the role of mediator in the complex relationships of scale and rank and the task of transforming a confused agglomerate of buildings and open spaces into a coherent urban condition”³⁸. However, while the museum is an important center in this urban fabric, its public park, also designed by Siza, is an example of how the architecture of our landscape can further contribute to the museum’s

rootedness in pilgrimage.

While Schinkel's Altes Museum is a site of pilgrimage as a beacon or temple, or Libeskind's Jewish Museum is a pilgrimage and an experience of a journey, Siza's museum, and more specifically, its Bonaval Park, is a site of pilgrimage in that its landscape holds a direct relationship to the experience and journeys of the past and of Santiago de Compostela itself.

Santiago de Compostela has been and still is a city for the pilgrim and journeyer. It is a town of shifting topographies, stairs and ramps, and now boasts a gridded city with shops and restaurants beside its old medieval core. This pilgrimage city is represented in the small park by Alvaro Siza, behind his Museum for Contemporary Art. The park and its different landscapes act as a microcosm of the city itself, further embedding the museum within this landscape as a center for pilgrimage. Within the plan of the park, Siza is able to capture the topography of the city, with its many stairs and ramps, as well as the life of the city, from its medieval winding streets to its more modern and orthogonally planned city. The park is accessible from the streets of the city as well as from the outskirts of the countryside which lie close by, another reminder that Santiago de Compostela is a city whose margins and peripheries are never far. Santiago de Compostela's role as a religious center is emphasized by the park housing an old church, while the everyday visitors to the museum of the site are also a reminder of the changes that the city has gone through. These visitors are the modern pilgrims to a site where pilgrims have been passing for hundreds of years. There is also the constant reminder of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, a distant landmark seen from the park, but one that constantly takes the visitor back to the true heart of this once medieval city.

While the park is an expression of the pilgrimage landscape of Santiago de

Compostela, it is also a reconstruction of a fallen cemetery. Siza, respecting history and its traces, wanted “to throw light on the newly appearing vestiges of the past, i.e. The ruins of ancient walls and buildings, burial plots, pathways and especially natural elements such as water and stone”³⁹. In so doing, Siza is able to design a new and public park which respects and honors the passage of time and space. In this sense, “memory, which is so important to a city’s self-affirmation, is here maintained by the conservation of stone niche structures, which act as splendid closures for these remembrance sites”⁴⁰. A cemetery is a living example of the traces of history, a place where the thoughts, minds, and stories from the past reside. Here, Siza has extended his museum into the park and created a true place of meditation, journeying and pilgrimage. The museum and park are another reminder of how a museum can be a sacred place of pilgrimage.



Figure 8: A. Siza, Galicia Museum of Contemporary Art, Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Site Plan



Figure 9-10: A. Siza, Santo Domingo de Bonaval Park, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

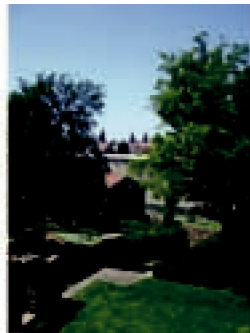


Figure 11: A. Siza, Galicia Museum of Contemporary Art, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

Conclusion

It may be telling to take one final look at the root of pilgrimage. When one studies the word itself, the “Latin ‘*peregrinus*’ from which pilgrim is derived suggests broader interpretations, including foreigner, wanderer, exile, and traveler, as well as newcomer and stranger”⁴¹. All these interpretations make up the multiple dimensions of what pilgrimage is and what being a pilgrim means today. While arguments still exist and will continue in regards to the blurred line between pilgrimage and tourism, this paper has called for all dimensions of pilgrimage to be embraced and understood.

Today’s world is inherently different to that of Antiquity or the Middle Ages and our acts and practices of devotion are more diverse as well. With changes in society come changes in how we as human beings exist within our ever-expanding and globalizing landscape. The museum is an architectural expression of the importance we as a society still put on our past and our appreciation of aesthetic and cultural heritage.

Case studies of different museums have shown the multiple dimensions and different interpretations of how a museum is seen, designed, perceived and appreciated as a site of pilgrimage. Considering the museum as a site of pilgrimage allows one to embrace the sacred nature of the museum as well as to develop an understanding of the museum’s role in the urban context of the city and the design and journey inside the museum itself.

A museum is a landmark, a center, and a destination. It is a place of tourism, and ultimately a place of pilgrimage. While its roles will evolve over time and the museum will exist in countless ways, one hopes that it will always be a place of cultural and artistic admiration and respect. The cultural pilgrims of today will become the pilgrims of tomorrow. However, as it has throughout history, a museum will always remain a museum, a place to be visited.

Precedent Study Diagrams

This diagram places Schinkel's Altes Museum within the urban context of Berlin's Museum Island. Contrasting the scale of the city to the human scale of Schinkel's drawing, these shifting perspectives serve to recognize the differing roles of the museum as a cultural pilgrimage destination and center as well as an individual and personal temple for the arts.

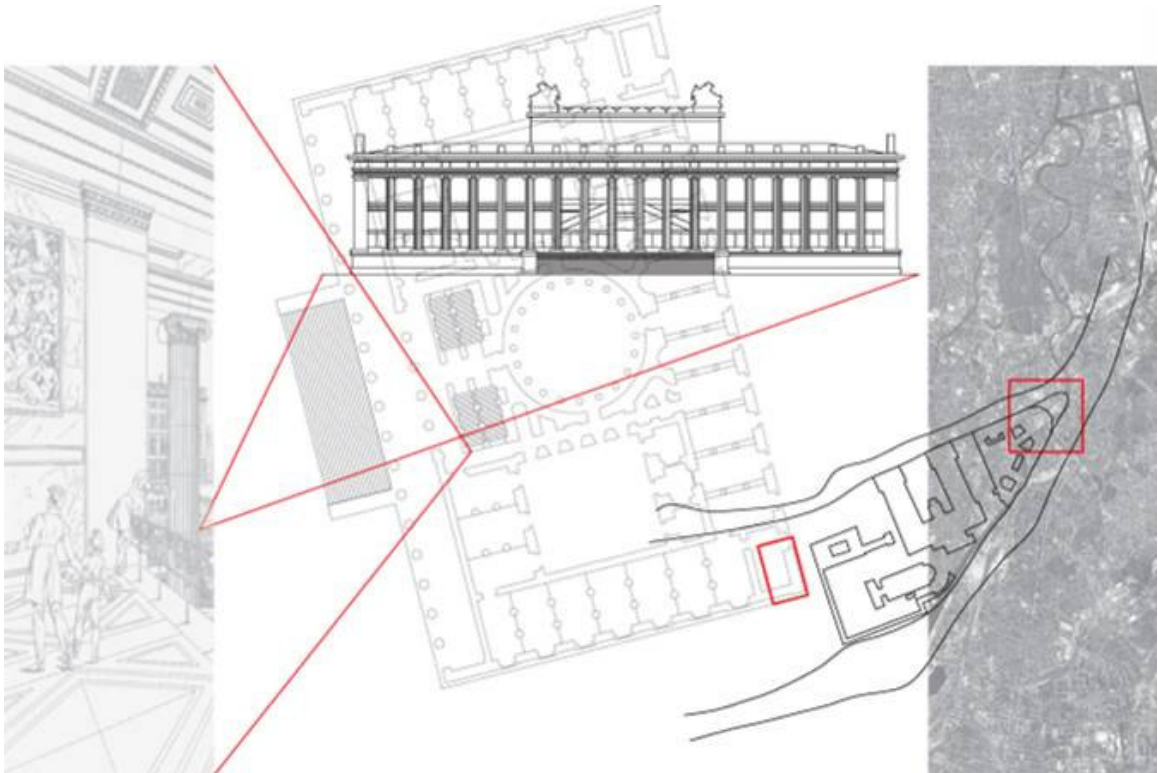


Figure 12: Diagram: K.F Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin, Germany

This diagram unfolds the three axes of Libeskind's Jewish Museum in order to highlight its journey and its paths. The holocaust void is presented as a still and solid volume while the procession of the stairs of continuity is highlighted at a larger scale to address its movement. The platform of experience in the Garden of Exile is a simple plane extending from the photograph in order to highlight its role of experience and contemplation.

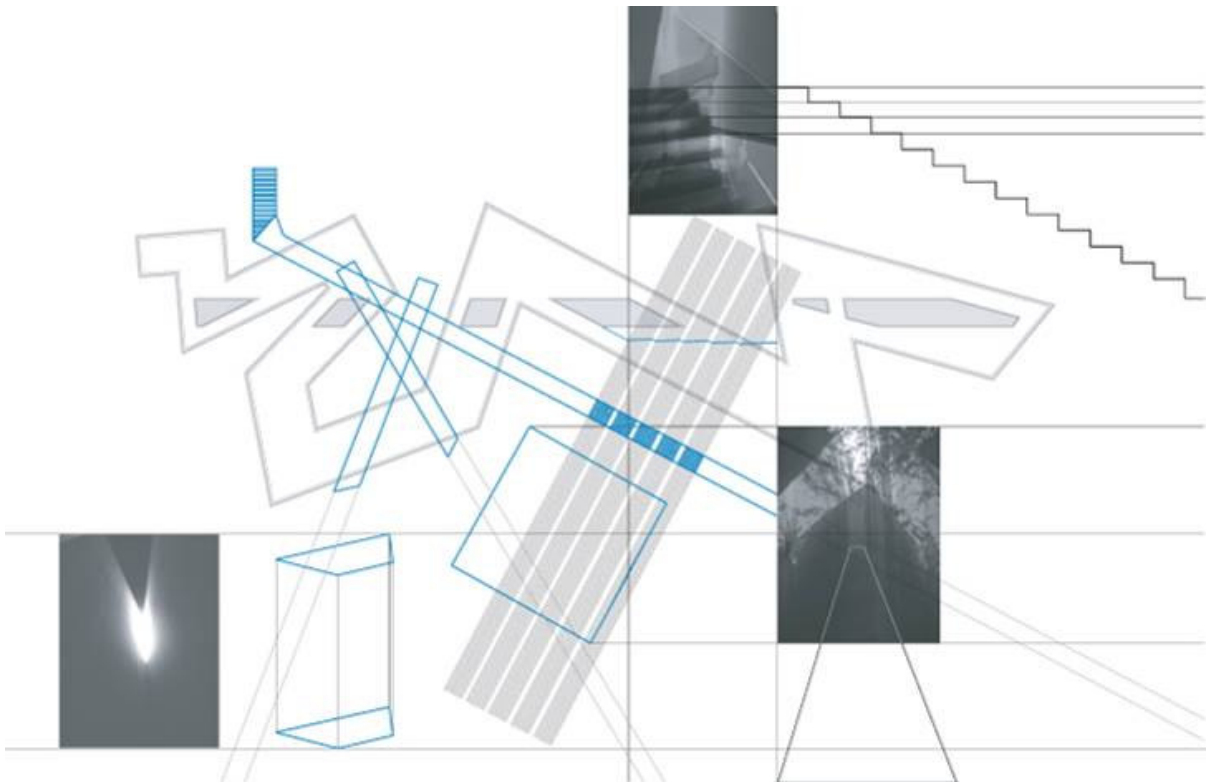


Figure 13: Diagram: D. Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, Germany

This diagram highlights moments in Alvaro Siza's Bonaval Park that can be read as a mirror of the larger urban context of Santiago de Compostela. By comparing these scales, the landscape of the museum can be mirrored to the pilgrimage landscape of the greater city.

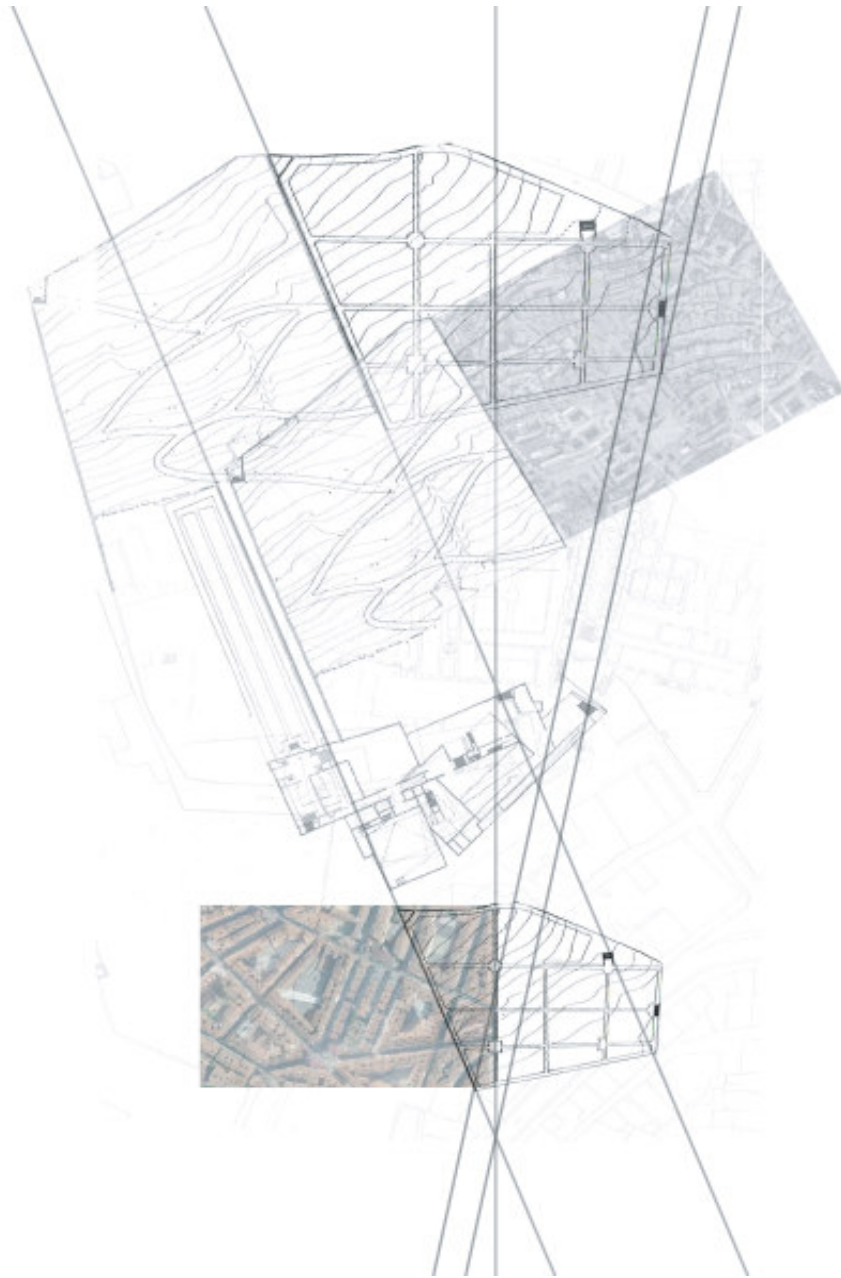


Figure 14: Diagram: A. Siza's Galicia Museum of Contemporary Art in Santiago de Compostela, Spain

CHAPTER III

BRUGES, BELGIUM-MUSEUM AS CULTURAL PILGRIMAGE SITE

Cultural Pilgrimage: Bruges as a site for a Museum

The study of the museum as a site of pilgrimage will inform the development and design of a museum in Bruges, Belgium. Certain principles from the research will influence the intentions for the design of the museum. The thesis of the project will question how cultural and aesthetic pilgrimage can be architecturalized in order to develop the program and design of the museum.

Comparing cultural tourism to religious pilgrimage allows for much exploration and several components from the research will be highlighted in order to define and further identify the problem. Notions of path, urban context, journey and sacredness will all inform the design and development of the project.

As the research has shown, there exist ongoing arguments on the differentiation between tourism and pilgrimage. However, as has been argued, this thesis hopes to include tourism as one of the many dimensions of modern day pilgrimage. In a world where “communion with God in prayer [as well as religious pilgrimage] has lost its central place...because of changing conditions in our society”⁴², we must use our new cultural landscapes as a platform for modern pilgrimage. In this sense, the cultural tourist is a pilgrim of our modern age.

As a medieval city, Bruges is embedded in its history. However small, it still receives more than 4 million tourists every year. The contrast between its medieval and fortified past with its open and permeable global boundary today sets Bruges up as a perfect site in order to develop a museum upon principles of tourism, time, and cultural pilgrimage.

Design Considerations and Intentions

Following research and the study of precedent museums, three important elements must be followed through into the design of this museum project. These form the intentions of the design.

1. First, the museum must respond to the urban context of Bruges. With a study of its history, land use, urban flow, open space and urban landmarks, the museum must be considered as both an individual element, but also as a part of the urban fabric in which it lies.
2. Second, the design of the museum will respond to the notion of the journey and pilgrimage. As has been argued, both its place in Bruges as well as its own design will be considered in terms of pilgrimage. As a museum is a journey through the arts and history and at its core a space to wander through, the design will apply the learned notions of journey, pathways and peregrination.
3. Third, the museum and its landscape will be considered together. The open space and landscape of the site must be designed to respond to the urban fabric as well as act as a landscape of cultural pilgrimage.

Site Analysis: Bruges, Belgium

Development and Evolution Of Bruges, Belgium

Once a walled medieval city, Bruges has changed drastically in the last century. As shown in this diagram, its margins where once held within its walls and the surrounding canals of the city. In our modern world, the city has expanded well outside of this boundary and its peripheries now spread over a vast amount of land making up the outer city limits of Bruges with a population exceeding 150,000 people.

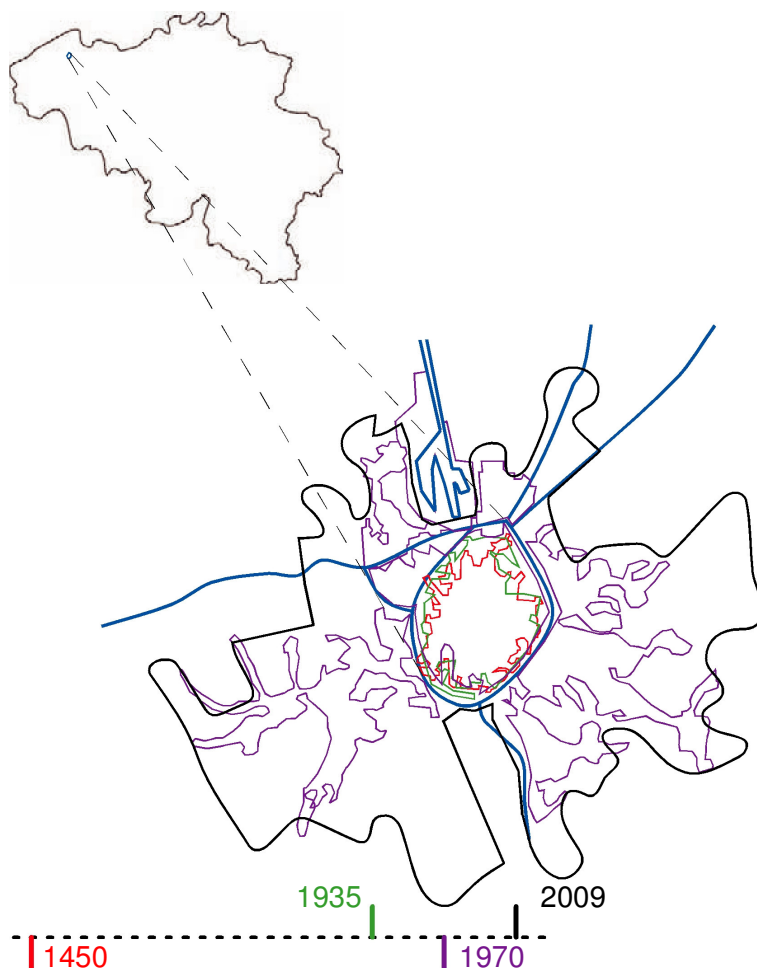


Figure 15: Diagram: Evolution of Bruges, Belgium

Transportation Centers

In contrast to the seven medieval gates along its border, once the main entrances to the town, access to Bruges today is primarily concentrated to the south of the city. These transportation centers act as the funnels from which the millions of tourists, visitors, and residents arrive at the inner city of Bruges every year.

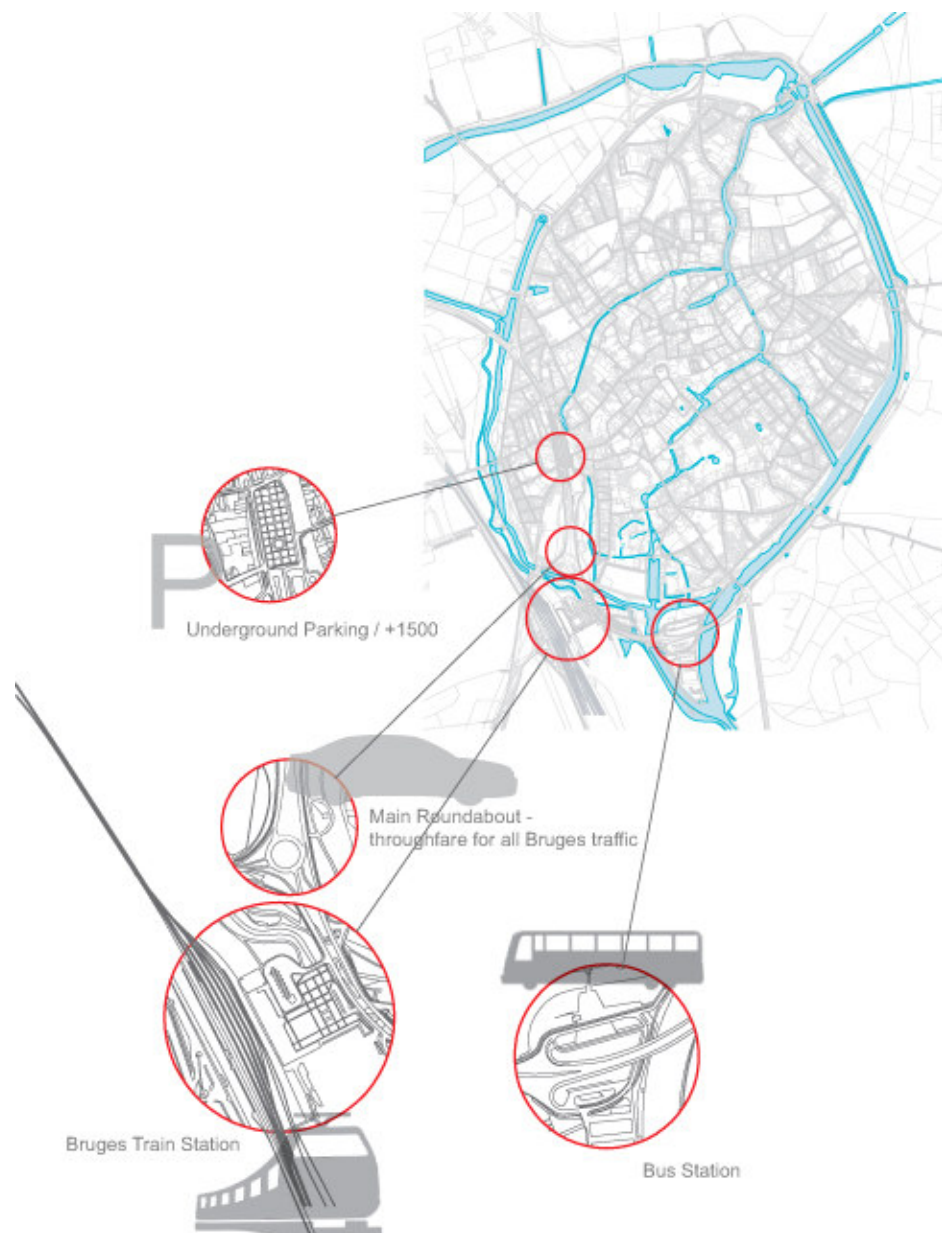


Figure 16: Diagram: Transportation Centers

Open Space Boundary

By highlighting the open green space of Bruges, this diagram demonstrates the boundary condition of the inner city. A 4 ½ mile bike and walking path borders the inner city and acts both as a buffer from the modern city outside as well as a welcoming landscape for incoming residents and tourists.

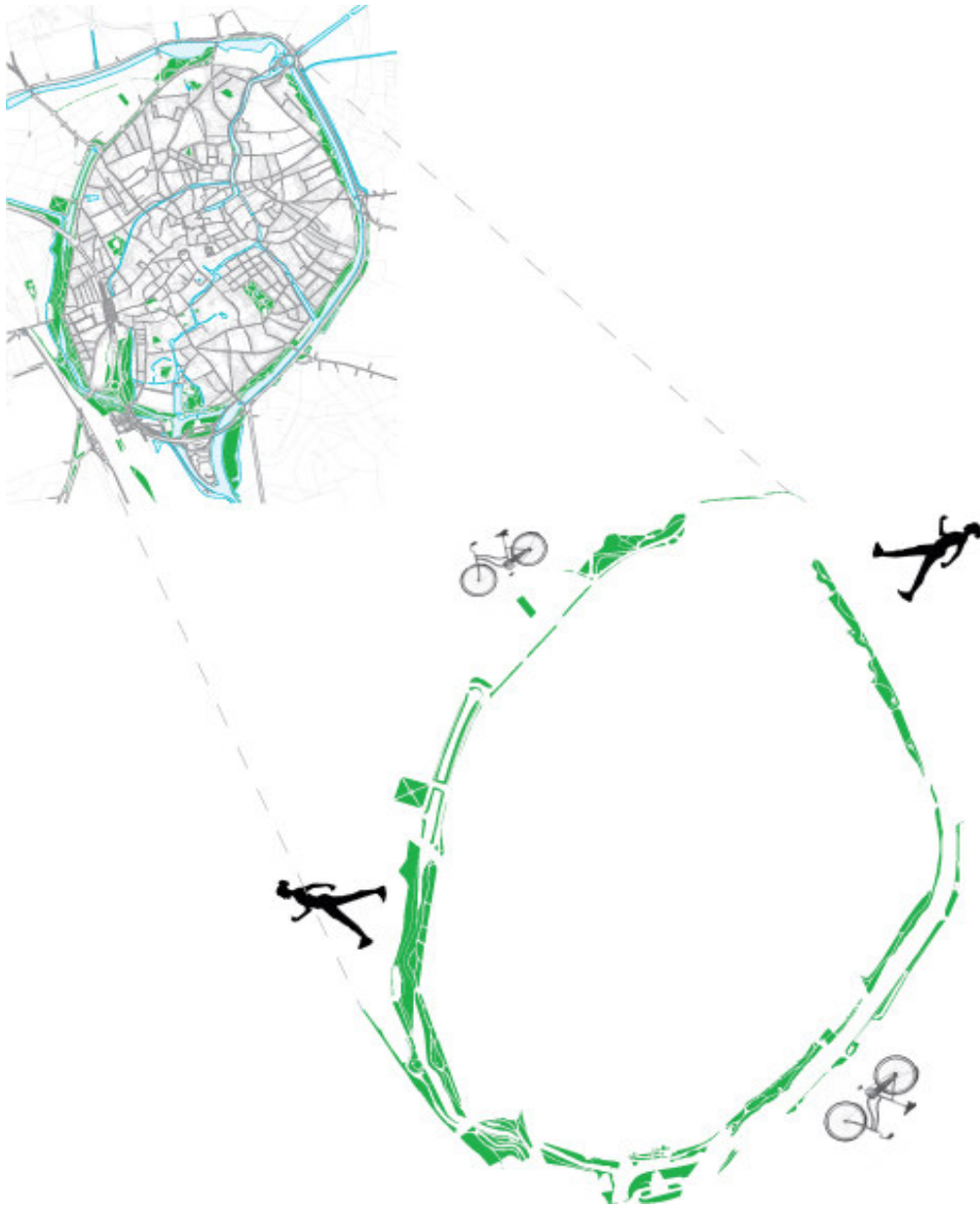


Figure 17: Diagram: Open Space Boundary

Top Cultural Destinations

The main cultural destinations of Bruges are concentrated within a cultural core of the city. These attractions all receive more than 100,000 visitors per year and are made up of the Cathedral, churches, city icons and museums.

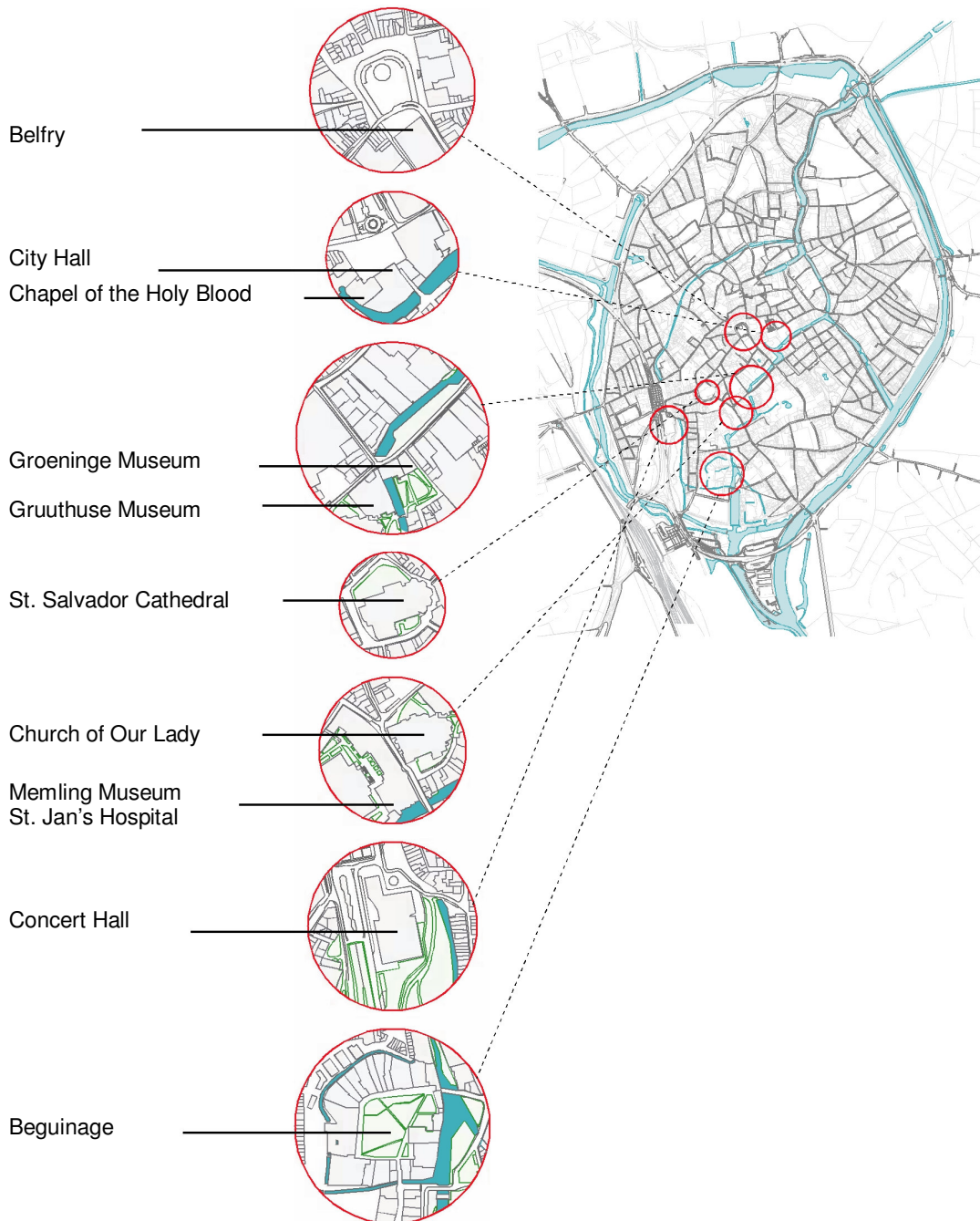


Figure 18: Diagram: Top Cultural Destinations

Relevant Land Use

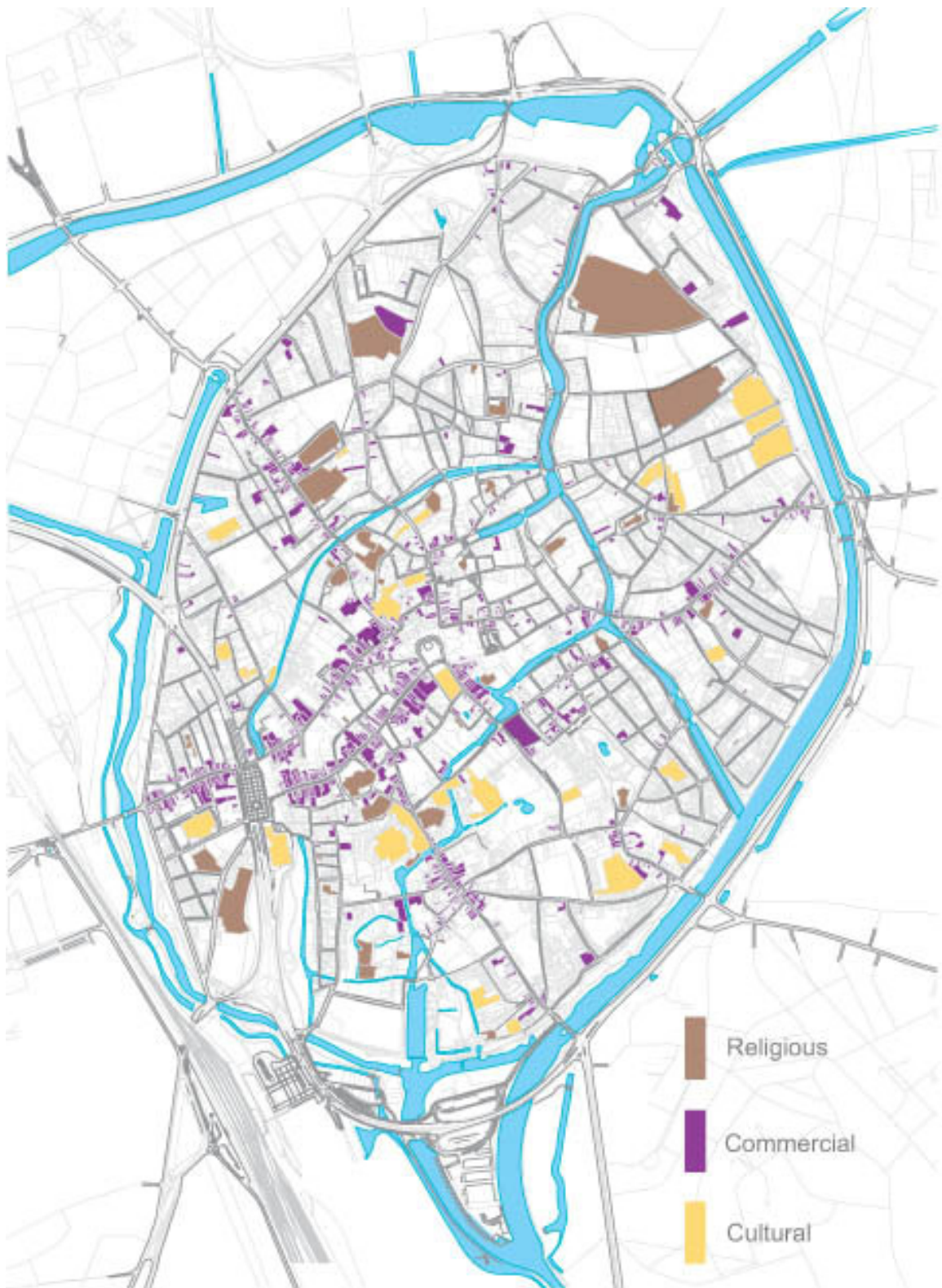


Figure 19: Diagram: Relevant Land Use

Land Use and Urban Fabric

With an understanding of where the relevant land use is distributed throughout the urban fabric of Bruges, this diagram highlights a pattern of commercial use that produces two axes that run almost perpendicular to each other. These intersect within the cultural core of the inner city, where most of Bruges' popular cultural highlights can be found. By separating these land use functions from the rest of the fabric, the core and both axes offer an underlying directionality and logic beneath the city's winding streets.



Figure 20: Diagram: Land Use and Urban Fabric

CHAPTER IV

DESIGN-MUSEUM OF MEDIEVAL AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Program: The Old and the New: Museum of Medieval and Contemporary Art

As pilgrimage has changed through the centuries, so has the city of Bruges and the development of art and its history. The proposed museum will be two fold in its display, both Old and New.

The Groeninge Museum in Bruges holds a rich collection of Flemish Master's paintings from around the Middle Ages. These include many religious, as well as other historic and Medieval works of art. When hosting a temporary exhibition, these masterpieces are stored away, along with the rest of its collection. The proposed museum will house a collection of the stored masterpieces, as well as act as a vessel for Groeninge's permanent collection when moved for temporary exhibits. In addition, this museum will house a contemporary collection of art and offer a temporary and flexible space for new artists and temporary exhibitions.

In this sense the museum will be a mirror to the shifting perspectives of pilgrimage and sacredness, reflecting the passage of time through the work it displays.

Table 1: Program

Lobby:	7000 sq ft (approx.)
Exhibition Space:	
Medieval Collection	5000 sq ft (approx.)
Contemporary Collection	5000 sq ft (approx.)
Temporary Collection	3000 sq ft (approx.)
Cafe/Bookstore:	3500 sq ft (approx.)
Offices:	1500 sq ft (approx.)
Restrooms:	800 sq ft (approx.)
Storage:	2000 sq ft (approx.)
TOTAL:	27, 800 sq ft (approx.)

The Site

This diagram presents the project site in relation to the urban fabric of Bruges. Situated along the open space and canal boundary of the inner city, the site is embedded within several other overlapping layers of the urban context. It is south of the cultural core, yet located along a directional commercial axes of the city. It is also located at one of the major transportation funnels of the city, the bus station.

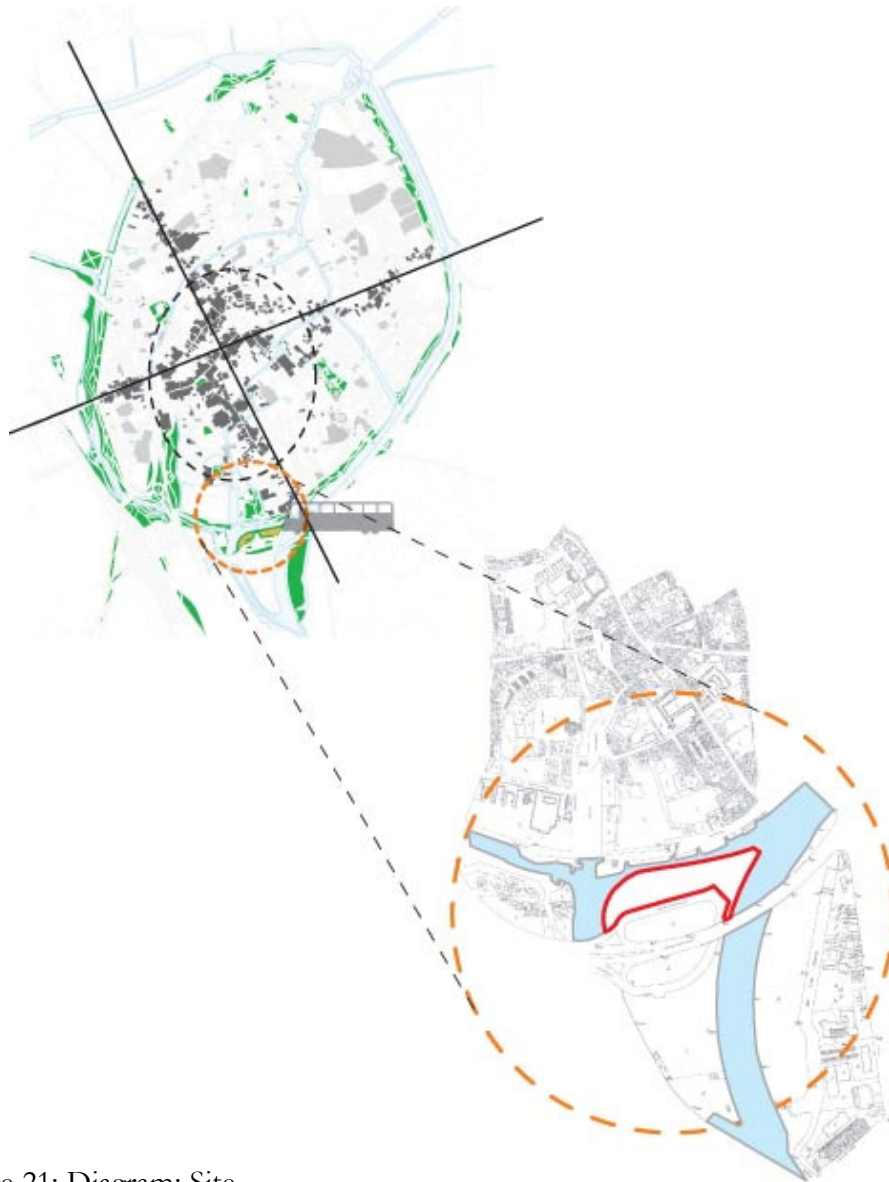


Figure 21: Diagram: Site

Concept of Design

“The act of separation is perhaps one of the most significant components of the pilgrim’s journey. Similar to ancient initiation rites, the pilgrim is separated from society and placed in a ‘marginal state.’ This intermediary zone acts as a bridge between the pilgrim’s old life and the hoped-for healing cure or spiritual transformation; it is both a physical path and an emotional state.”⁴³

T. Barrie. Spiritual Path, Sacred Place.

The concept for the design of the museum stems directly from its site as well as the notion of a museum as a site of pilgrimage. The museum will occupy space that once lay beside the defined margins of the medieval city. Historic maps and accounts, as well as remains, show that Bruges once had a perimeter defense wall surrounding what is now considered the main ‘egg’ of the city. A 1562 drawing clearly shows Bruges as a walled city. The location of the proposed museum is just outside this perimeter.

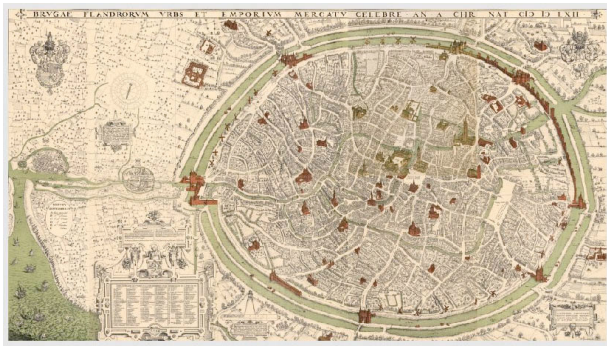


Figure 22: Marcus Gerards, Bruges, Belgium: Plan, 1562

The defensive wall had several functions, including protection and keeping the inner city of Bruges separated from the ‘world’ outside. Changes over time now present this city in very different terms. Bruges today is open and is part of ever globalizing tourism. Of the original seven city gates, four still exist. They are no longer connected with a thick boundary of security. Tourist flood into the city via modern transportations hubs such as the train and bus station, as well as with automobiles. These tourists are the new cultural pilgrims to this modern city. In a survey taken, some 90% of tourists listed *culture* as their number one reason to visit.

Following the study of the museum as a site of pilgrimage, this site, located along what once separated outsiders from the city, is now able to act as a cultural bridge for the thousands of modern pilgrims passing into Bruges.

The Wall

In order to link the site in its historical roots, the first relevant element of this concept is how to reinterpret the defined marginal wall of the historic city. In this regard, the wall becomes the main entrance bar of the museum. Instead of standing for closure, security and protection, the new *wall* will stand for transparency, openness, and display. The lobby, as the entrance to the museum, will function as an open wall, drawing in many of the 4 million cultural pilgrims that arrive to the city each year. In fact, located beside one of the three main transportation hubs, the site further stands as a balance between the old city and its new cultural landscape.

The Galleries

The three main galleries of the museum will be embedded within the open and transparent bar. The gallery spaces will be defined individually but are connected through passages. The galleries will be separated in a temporal sense, as each will stand for a different time period. The first is the medieval gallery, which will hold an art collection from the 13th to 15th century. The second is the contemporary wing. Between these two galleries is an open and flexible gallery, which will serve as a space for temporary exhibitions, as well as a connection between the two solid and permanent galleries.

The Journey

Argued as a site of modern and cultural pilgrimage, the other main stance that the museum will take is that of the journey. Journey is interpreted here in both spatial and temporal terms. Spatially, the physical manifestation of the journey is crucial in the design of the museum. Since the museum is a place to walk through, the route will accentuate the journey the visitor will take through time. Ramps, stairs, bridges, and paths will be used to weave the different gallery spaces together. Through their sectional relationship, there is also a spatio-temporal connection between different levels of the museum. As one goes up the ramp and into the medieval gallery space, the journey will then weave through the different time periods of the museum, forcing the pilgrim to be aware of the shifting cultural landscapes they inhabit.

Material / Dress

Materials play a significant role in the concept of this museum and are considered in terms of open and closed. Both the lobby bar and the flexible gallery are considered as open volumes, putting the 'paths' on display. The two permanent collections, the 'places' are considered to be housed in solid and closed volumes.

Materially, these concepts are articulated with an abstracted orientation toward local culture and tradition. The façade of the main wall of the museum will make reference to the traditional lace of Bruges. The tradition of lace and its delicacy will add to the lightness and open nature of the lobby area. The thin pattern of the façade fabric will also give an atmospheric effect to the experience of the journeys within. Just as clothes were once purposely cut in order to show the laced undergarments, the pattern of lace on the façade will display the journeys that take place behind it.

In contrast, the material of the two solid volumes will be of red brick. This thicker and heavier choice is a local construction material, found throughout Bruges. Both the material and its color are an important way to link this modern and contemporary museum with the city in which it will exist. In addition, the façades which embed themselves into the open lobby will be of wood. Most facades of medieval Bruges were of wood. Two original façades still remain this way. The changes in materials will refer to the historical context and will give a warmer materiality to the façades which come in direct contact with the journeyers through the museum.

In conclusion, the form of the museum is based on the concept of the open wall. It is a direct reference to the history of the site and of the city. As the visitors walk into the open wall, they are greeted with the different journeys and destinations of the museum. On display within will be both the art and sculpture of different time periods, as well as the present pilgrimages of all the visitors.

In addition, the details and materials of the museum will make a reference to the history of Bruges, as well as the experience of the journey. The open bar into which the solid galleries protrude will be of a delicate fabric, while the permanent galleries will be of more solid and traditional materials that were used in the Middle Ages.

Design

Diagrams

Lobby as Open Wall

As opposed to the medieval fortified wall that ran around the old city, the lobby bar of the museum is conceived as an open wall. It puts the museum on display and is meant to be open and inviting. This role is in contrast to the medieval wall which was protective and disinviting.



1562

2009

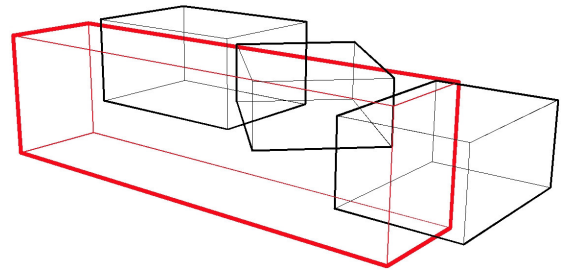


Figure 23: Marcus Gerards, Bruges, Belgium: Plan, 1562 and Aerial Photograph of Site
Figure 24: Diagram: Lobby as Open Wall

Open vs. Closed / Path vs. Place

The open lobby as well as the flexible gallery space are considered as open and transparent volumes. The museum galleries, both the contemporary and medieval ones, are considered as solid.

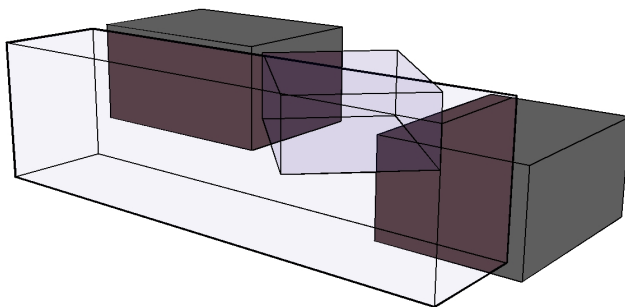


Figure 25: Diagram: Open vs. Closed / Path and Place

Circulation as Journey

The circulation throughout the museum is on display from the glass lobby space. The path meanders through the museum and refers to a journey in space and in time. One also begins and ends at different points, following a path that leads one through the galleries.

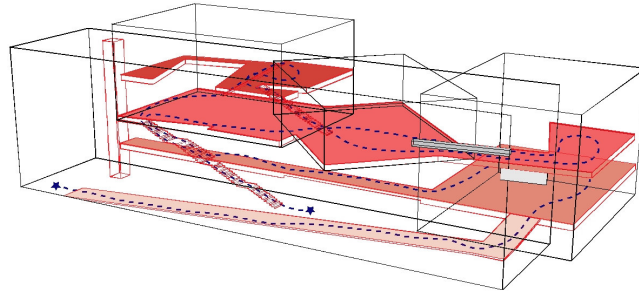


Figure 26: Diagram: Circulation as Journey

Materials

The openness and transparency of the glass lobby will be further accentuated with a thin and delicate metal pattern, referencing traditional lace of Bruges and creating an atmospheric effect within the active volume. Both gallery volumes are of brick, or brick colored material. Their facades within the glass lobby are of wood. Both the brick and wooden facades are references to architecture specific to this region.

Figure 27: Screen Façade Design (Thom Faulders, Hajime Masubuchi, Tokyo 2007)
Lace, Ministry of Culture Façade (Frederic Druot, Paris 2006)

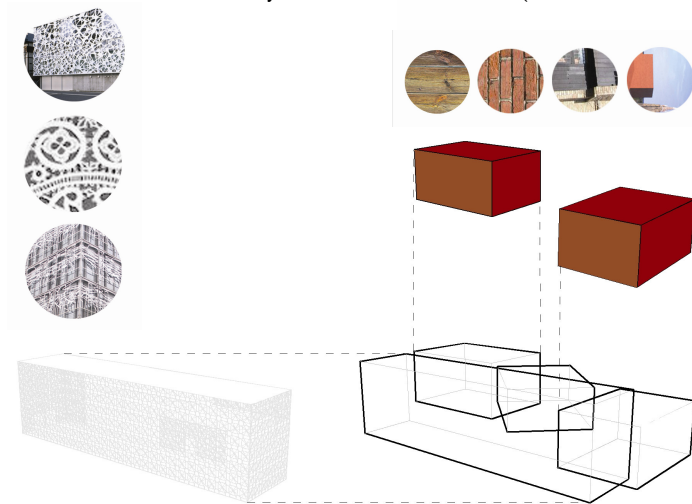


Figure 28: Wood, Brick, Wood and Brick Facade, Concert Hall (Paul Robbrecht and Hilde Daem, Bruges 2002)

Figure 29: Diagram: Materials

Site Plan

(not to scale)



Figure 30: Site Plan

Plans

(not to scale)

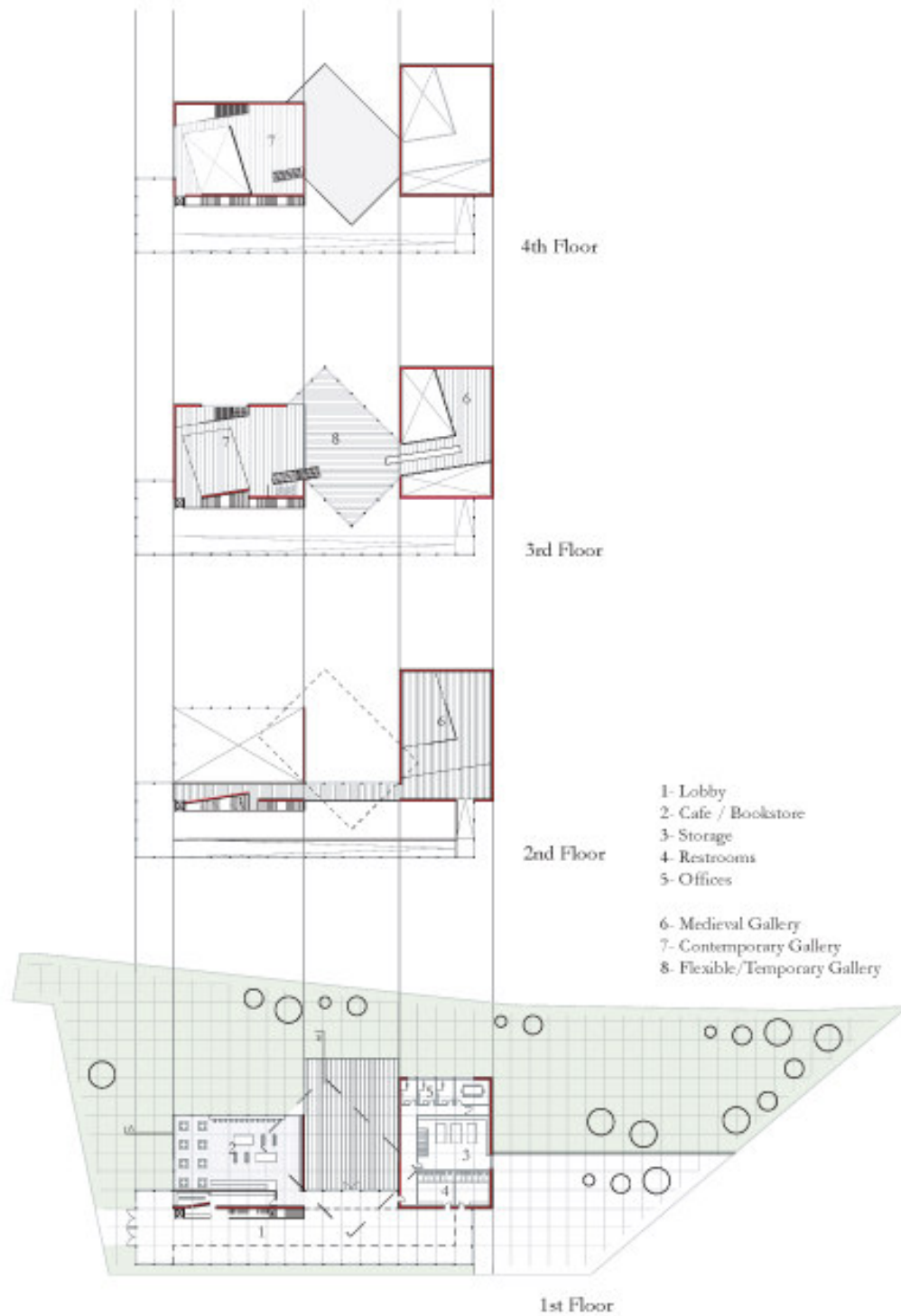


Figure 31: Floor Plans

Sections
(not to scale)

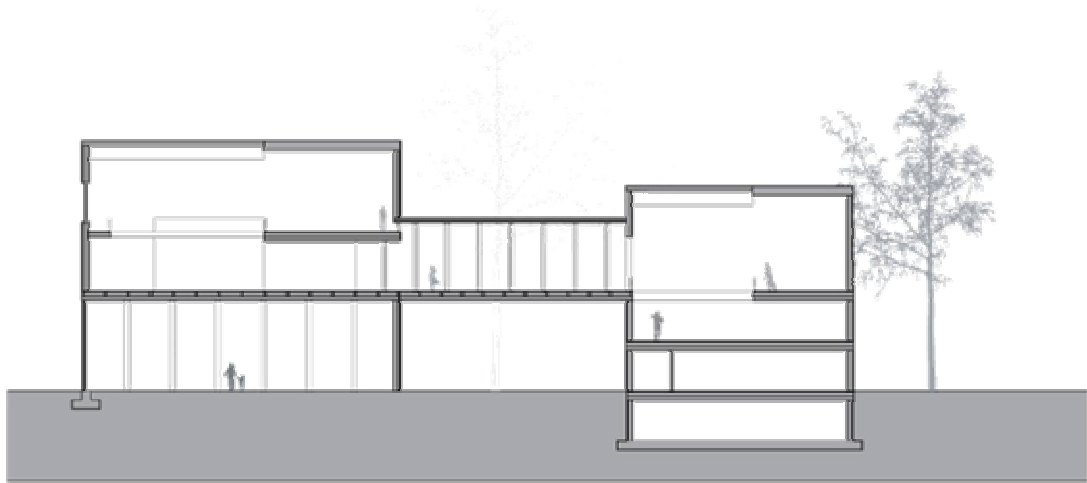


Figure 32: Longitudinal Section A

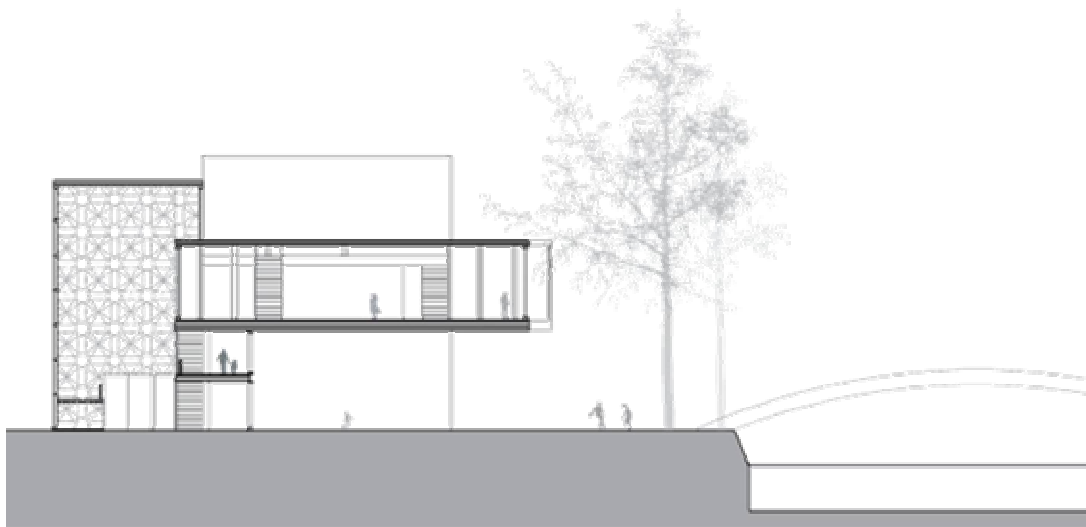
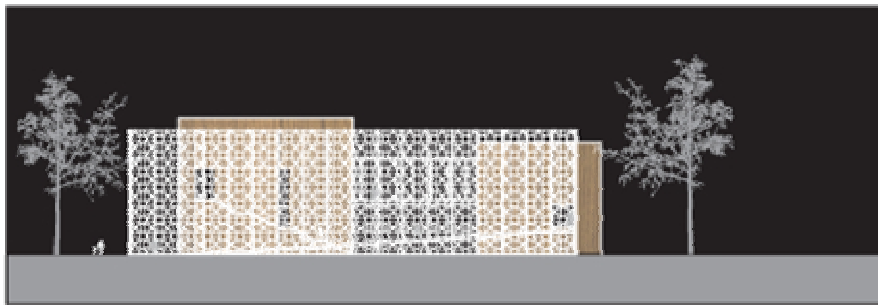


Figure 33: Transverse Section B

Elevations
(not to scale)



South Elevation



East Elevation



North Elevation



West Elevation

Figure 34: Elevations

Exterior/Interior Renderings and Perspectives

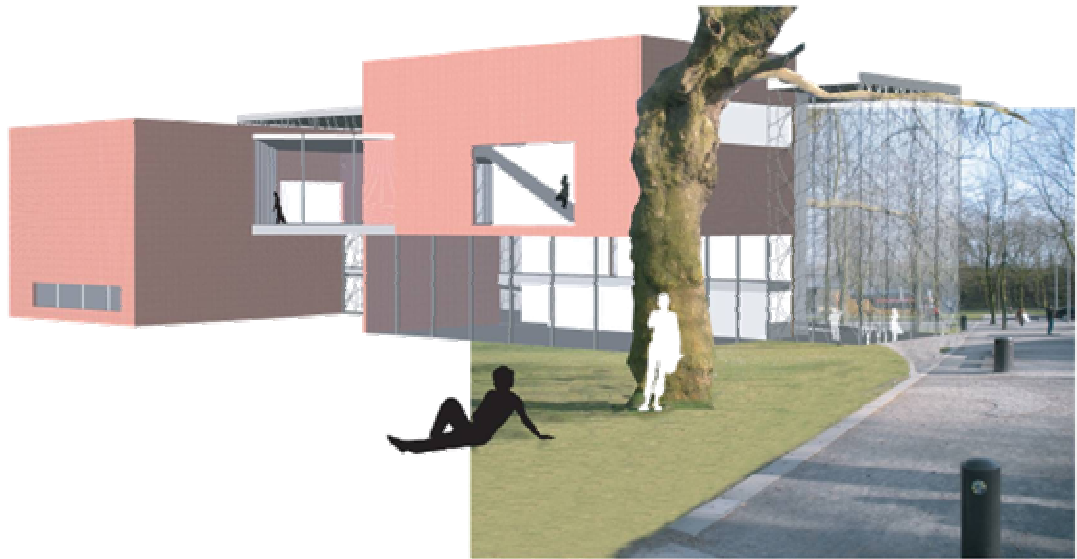


Figure 35: Exterior Rendering: View from Footbridge

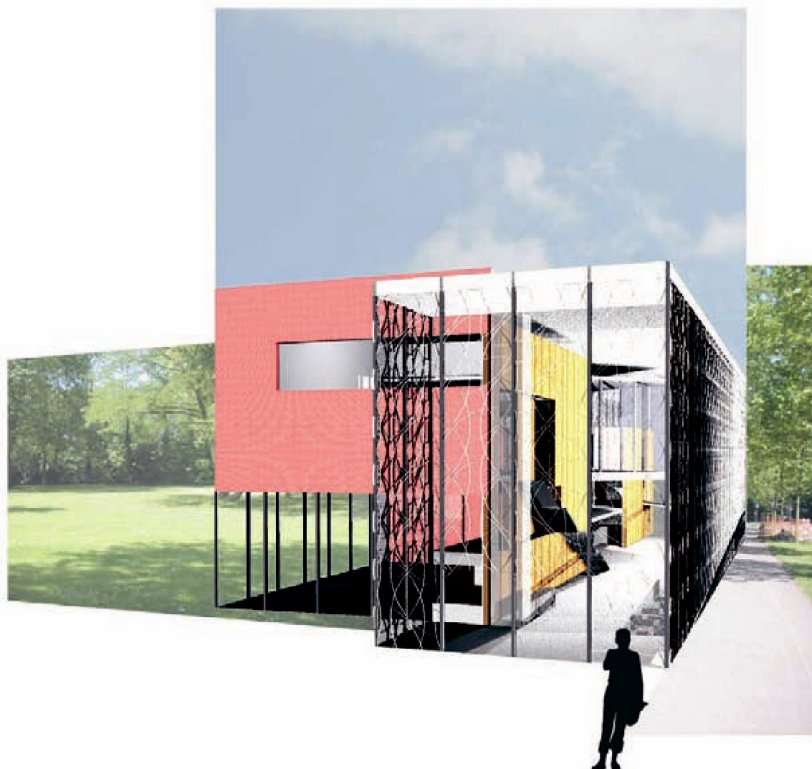


Figure 36: Exterior Rendering: View from Bus Stop

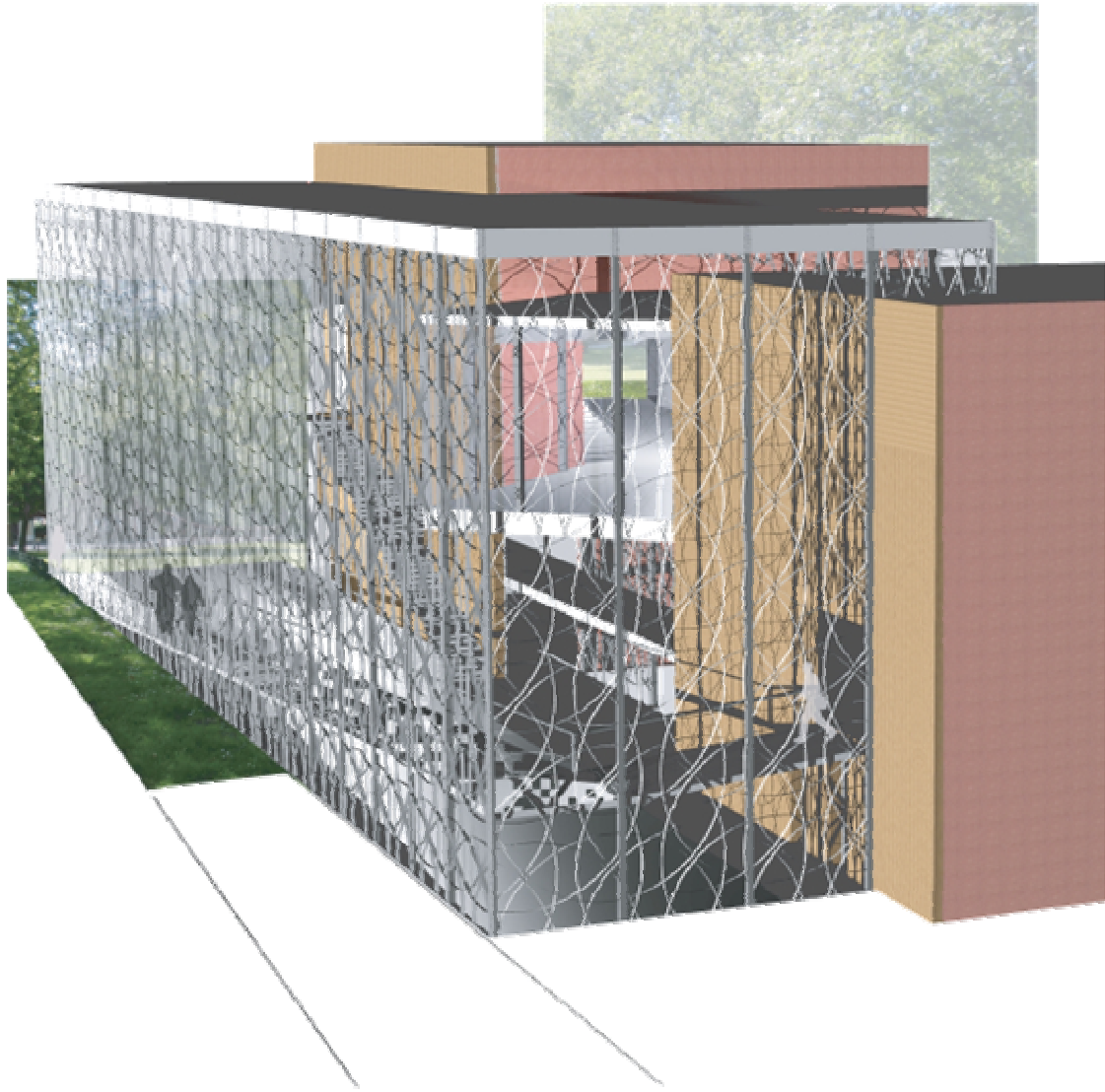


Figure 37: Exterior Rendering: View Looking towards Bus Stop



Figure 38: Interior Rendering: View from Flexible Gallery into Contemporary Gallery



Figure 39: View from Ramp into Medieval Gallery

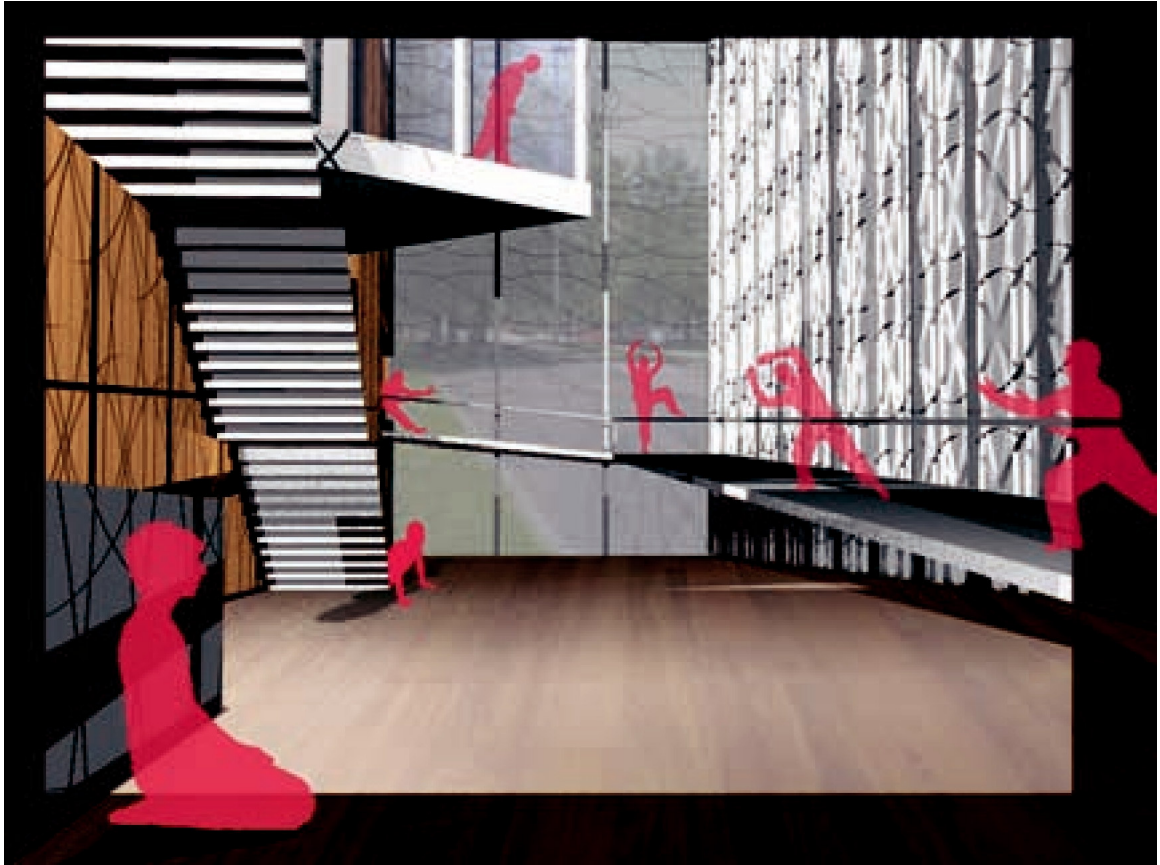


Figure 40: Interior Rendering: View from Main Lobby

Physical Model

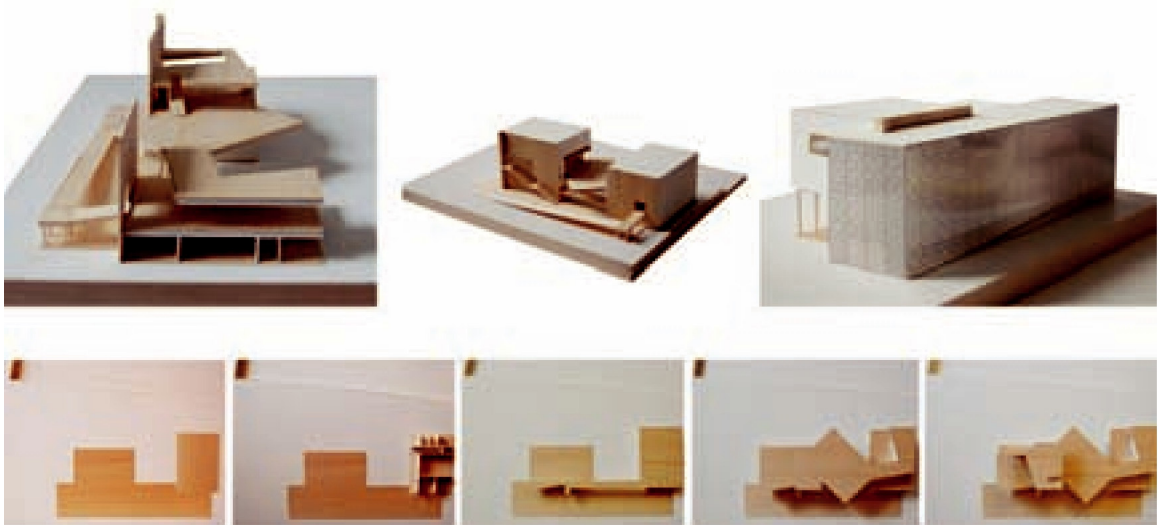
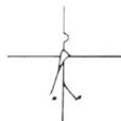


Figure 41: Model Photographs

CHAPTER V

DOCUMENTATION

Presentation Boards



Arguing that one of the multiple dimensions of a Museum's role is as a landmark of cultural pilgrimage, this Master's Thesis uses notions of pilgrimage and journeying to develop a Museum of Medieval and Contemporary Art in Bruges, Belgium.

As a top cultural destination for tourists, as well as a World Heritage Site, Bruges is a perfect location for a Museum based on ideas of tourism and cultural pilgrimage. In addition, the design of the Museum stems from a historic and present-day site analysis. From this study, various elements are reinterpreted in order to weave together the site's history with the pilgrim's notion of path and place.

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Master's Thesis

Figure 42: Presentation Board: Introduction



Figure 43: Presentation Board: Site Analysis



Figure 44: Presentation Board: Plans

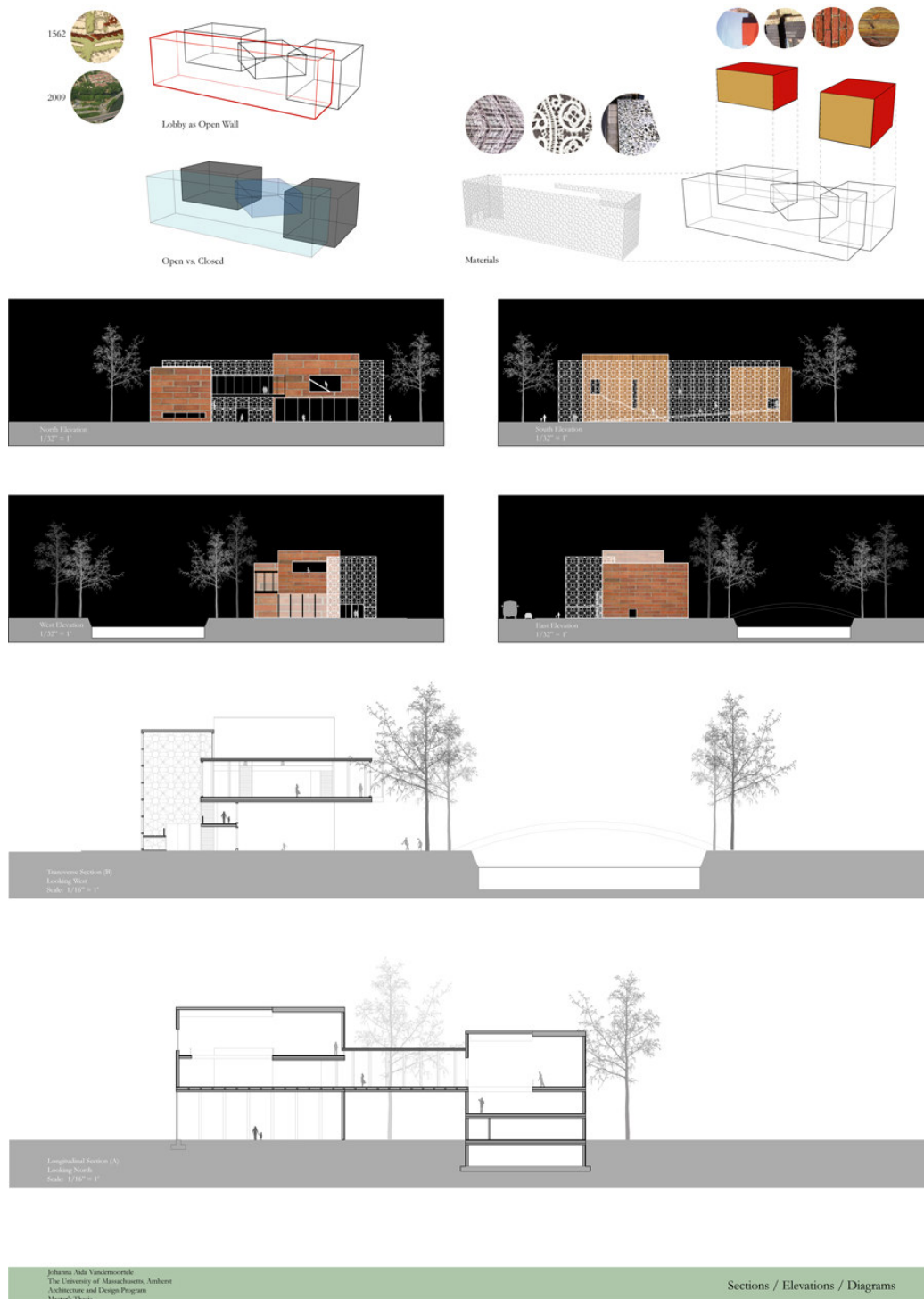


Figure 45: Presentation Board: Sections/Elevations/Diagrams



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Exterior Renderings / Model Photos

Figure 46: Presentation Board: Sections/Elevations/Diagrams

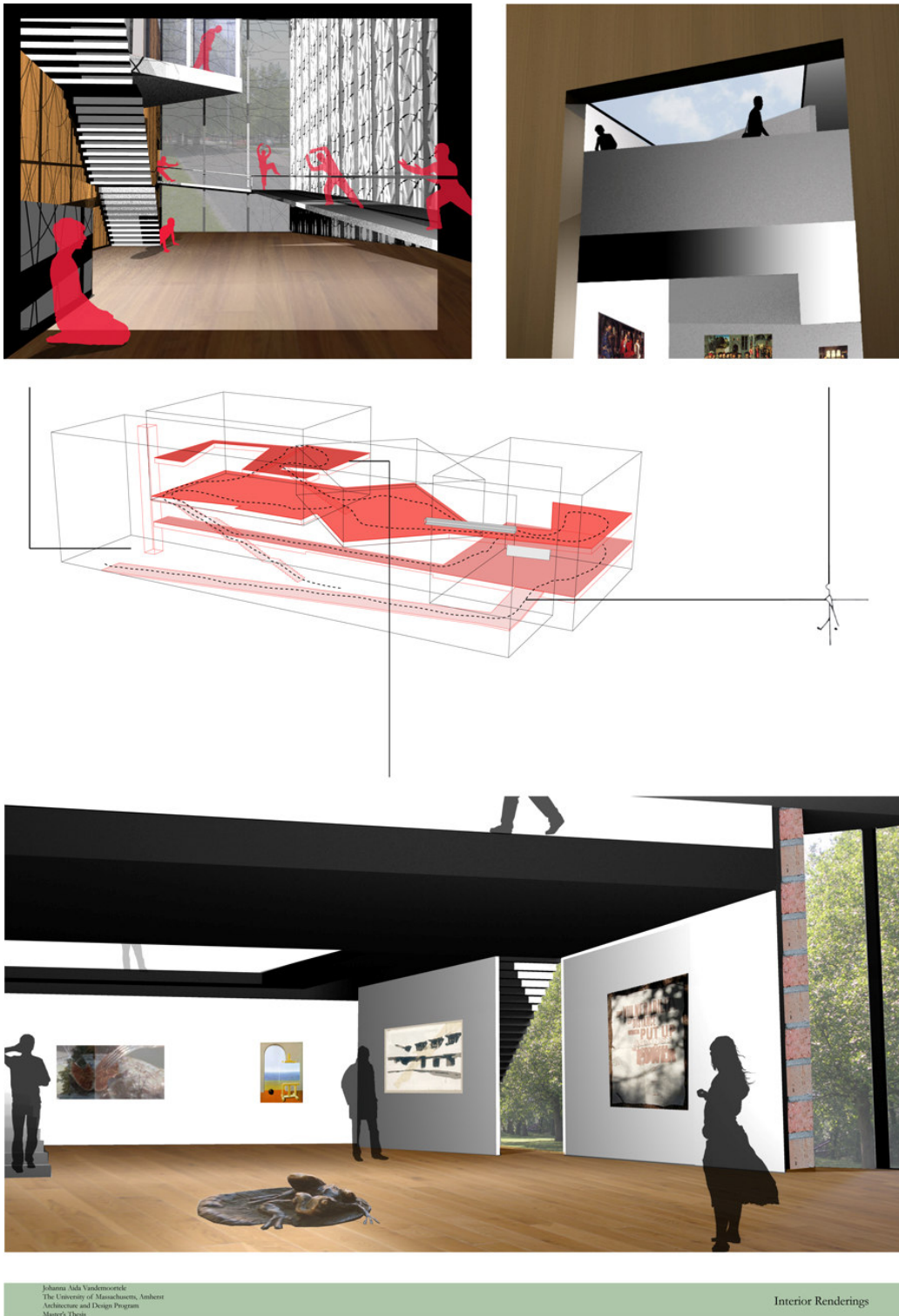


Figure 47: Presentation Board: Interior Renderings

Endnotes

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